Include Data

Data Collection and Use

Mission

Provide reliable data to inform, evaluate and make decisions to improve the well being of Idaho families and children.

Assessment Tool Purpose

Increase awareness of:

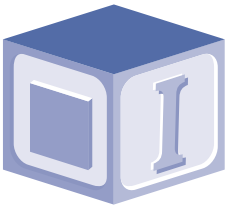
- Good data collection procedures
- Common terms used in data collection
- Current data collection procedures your organization uses
- Ideas to improve your current methods
- The value of data collection and usage Services Data Management

Self-Assessment Tool for Community Organizations

Did you know…a good data collection system could assist you in your work? Quality data can increase awareness about issues you care about. It can also be of use in programs or services, planning and writing grant proposals, and it will allow you to toot your own horn.

This checklist is designed to help you! Most organizations collect a lot of data so this self-assessment tool was developed to help you begin to think about the indicators that reflect the top priorities in your organization (those things that help your organization meet your goals).

Download copies of this tool at www2.state.id.us/FirstLady/council.html



Self-Assessment Tool

Answering the following questions will help you identify strengths and weaknesses in the data your organization collects. **Remember, there are no "perfect" databases or data sets.** Also, many people are uncomfortable with anything that looks like statistics. But, don't get frustrated. Instead, use this tool to help your organization improve.

Place a check mark in the column that best answers each question. Your answers should be based on the data management strategies your organization is currently using. Refer to the **explanations** and **definitions** sections if you are unsure of the terms used in the following questions. These sections follow the Self-Assessment section.

DATA COLLECTION	Yes	No	Needs To Be Improved	Don't Know
1. Do you use the **data** you currently collect?	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Is the data collected gathered in a **standardized** and **consistent** way year after year?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Do other agencies you work with collect the same **data indicators** in the same way (use the same collection methods)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Does your organization collect **process data** (a.k.a., programmatic or service data)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Does your organization collect **impact** or **outcome evaluation data**?	☐	☐	☐	☐
If yes, does your organization collect data that reflects important (salient) outcomes or measures of well being?	☐	☐	☐	☐

DATA REPORTING	Yes	No	Needs To Be Improved	Don't Know
1. When your organization reports its data to the public, is it easy to understand and unambiguous (clear)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Is the data you collect and report statistically sound and **valid**?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please pat yourself on the back for "yes" responses. Any "no", "needs improvement" or "don't know" responses may indicate that its time to plan for greater success by improving your organization's ability to collect and manage data.

Self-Assessment Tool Explanations and Defintions

DATA COLLECTION

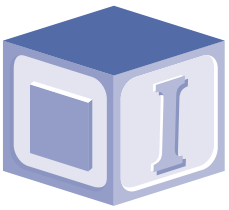
Explanation of Checklist Questions	Definition of Terms
1. *Do you use the **data** you currently collect?* Most organizations collect more data then they know what to do with. If your organization does not use the data it currently collects, why collect it? Does it help your organization or the community meet its goals, vision, or mission? *Wisdom:* Know what you collect and why.	**Data** is any information collected about your program or service. Data can be "quantitative" or "qualitative." ■ **Quantitative** (quantity) data is collected in a numerical form. Examples: The weight of a premature baby or the score on an evaluation test or number of children in the free and reduced school meal program or number of people attending a "Stop Smoking" class. ■ **Qualitative** (quality) data is information gathered in a narrative (non-numerical) form. Examples of qualitative data include focus group data that consists of peoples' perceptions or feelings. The answer to the question, "How do you feel that our program has benefited you and your family?" is an example of qualitative data.
2. *Is the data collected in a **standardized** and **consistent** way year after year?* Data must be collected in a consistent manner that includes a valid and reliable set of data collection forms and training. If the people collecting the data are not trained to complete the data collection forms and/or other tools correctly—then the data will differ depending on who completes the form. *Wisdom:* Good data collection tools and standardized procedures are keys to valid and reliable data.	**Standardization** and **consistency** in measurement is the extent to which you are measuring the same thing, under similar circumstances, time after time. Example: Utilizing the same survey and data collection procedures year after year will increase the consistency and quality of information you report.

DATA COLLECTION cont.

Explanation of Checklist Questions	Definition of Terms
3. *Do other agencies you work with collect the same data **indicators** in the same way (use the same collection methods)?* Indicators should be consistent between organizations and across the state. Much of the data collected by state agencies may be accurate and reliable, but unless other agencies and organizations follow the same data collection procedures, the statistics are not likely to be comparable. Comparability is important for planning, monitoring and evaluating services and programs across the community, region and state. *Wisdom:* Work with others whenever possible to improve the data collection in your community.	**Indicators** are a specific type of data that describe populations (groups of people) using previously agreed upon definitions. Indicators clarify the focus of your work and provide something specific to collect, measure and report. Example: Common indicators collected in Idaho are: name, age, sex, county, school, education level, etc. **Measure of well-being** are another example of an indicator. These indicators could include areas of health and safety, economic security, educational attainment, or social, emotional, and environmental status. Example: Percentage of children fully immunized by age 2; percentage of children under 18 years of age with health insurance.
4. *Does your organization collect **process evaluation data** (a.k.a., **programmatic** or **service data**)?* These types of data should be used to help identify weaknesses and strengths in services or programs in order to maximize resources, personnel and money. This type of data is valuable, but process evaluation data are probably not related to the actual wellbeing of families and children. It would not be able to demonstrate the impact your services/program is having on the clients you serve.	**Process evaluation** is the assessment of policies, materials, personnel, performance, quality of practice or services, and other inputs and implementation experiences. **Programmatic data** is the data collected on specific interventions, programs, etc. **Service data** is the data collected on the population served. Example: numbers of people served, demographics of people served, feedback on evaluation forms from workshops you conduct, etc.
5. *Does your organization collect impact or outcome evaluation data?* *If yes, does your organization collect data that reflects important (salient) outcomes or measures of well being?* Measuring the impact or effectiveness of programs and services is critical for all organizations serving families and children.	**Outcomes** are the difference(s) the program or service makes in the lives of people and communities. Outcomes are changes in beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors the program produces. Example: Increase the knowledge of behaviors that decrease the risk for serious injury or death from motor vehicle crashes or teaching parents to lay an infant on their back instead of their stomach reduces the risk of death from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

DATA REPORTING

Explanation of Checklist Questions	Definition of Terms
1. *When your organization reports its data to the public is it easy to understand and unambiguous?* When reporting data, the data item must be easily understandable to the public. Measures that are too complex will not be effective in reaching the public. Be responsible with the data you report and make sure you can justify it. If you use your data to influence decision-making or policies, it would be wise to discuss it with similar agencies or organizations prior to the data being distributed. Make sure the data you report is statistically valid, it represents an appropriate sample and the tool you used to collect the data was valid and reliable. *Wisdom:* Before reporting data publicly, ask eight to ten people outside your organization to review the information. Always provide an explanation of the data and a narrative that connects it to an issue or problem.	Examples of reporting data: Poor Example: The death rate from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis is 17.5 in Kootenai County. Good Example: Death rate from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis is 17.5 deaths per 100,000 in Kootenai County, compared to the Idaho rate of 8.7 deaths per 100,000. The second example is easier to understand and puts the data into perspective.
2. *Is the data you collect and report statistically sound and* **valid***?*	**Valid** or validity reflects the amount of trust in the data collection instrument (e.g. survey, observation, etc.). Is the data collection instrument really measuring what it is intended to measure?



Resources to Find Idaho Data to Help Your Organization Measure Outcomes

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, Forum on Child and Family Statistics (703) 356-1964, http://childstats.gov

Boise State University, Center For Health Policy. (208) 334-2047

Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics. (208) 334-5992

Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services Data. http://www.hcfa.gov

Children in the States, Children's Defense Fund Data. http://www.childrensdefense.org

ChildTrends data book. www.childtrends.org

Facts, Figures, Trends (1999-2000), Idaho Department of Health & Welfare. www2.state.id.us/dhw. (208) 334-5500

Idaho Department of Commerce, Census Data. www.idoc.state.id.us

Kids Count Data Book, Annie E. Casey Foundation. www.aecf.org

Monitoring the Future Organization (alcohol & substance abuse) Data. http://monitoringthefuture.org

National Center For Health Statistics Data. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/

Northwest Area Foundation. www.nwaf.org; www.indicators.nwaf.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Data. http://www.samhsa.gov

Uniform Crime Reports. http://www.fbi.gov

U.S. Census Bureau. http://www.census.gov

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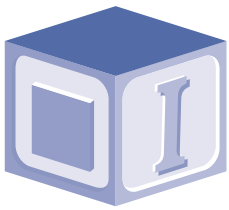

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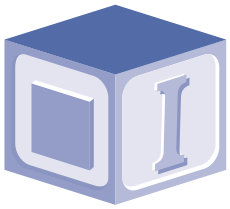

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